

the time the debate began. And all this hoopla about how we had everybody involved and there were task forces and so forth. The truth of the matter is this bill was written by one person, Speaker GINGRICH, sitting in his office with one special interest lobbyist after another coming in. These task forces that existed, they were just an excuse for democracy. Instead of having the normal committee process operate, little task forces would meet and go in and out of the Speaker's office, in secret, where the American people had no opportunity to observe what was happening.

Can you imagine raiding the Medicare trust fund to the extent of \$270 billion and not allowing one senior citizen in this country to testify on the specifics of the bill that provided for that raid?

Yet, my colleagues, that is precisely what happened with this new spirit of democracy and all the task forces and all the inclusion. The bill was written in the Speaker's office. The committee process was basically eliminated. I understand they are even considering the possibility of eliminating committees and perhaps just substituting a committee of one to write all of the legislation in this House.

You know, I have discussed this morning a bit tongue in cheek the fact that there was a painting that kind of summarized what was happening to seniors today, a painting by a famous American artists of the last century called plucked clean. It seemed to me that it symbolized what was happening here as our seniors were plucked clean and having to face higher deductibles and higher premiums and higher costs for health care at the time they were stretched to the limits.

Well, really, I think this same painting is a little bit symbolic of what is happening to democracy in this House. Instead of a proud eagle of democracy, democracy is being plucked clean in this House, because next week we are about to have the same thing happen. We have got something called reconciliation that is coming up, not the kind of reconciliation that happens between husband and wife. This is not a divorce unless it is the divorce between the reality of the real lives of the middle-class families that are working to make ends meet in this country and the Republican rhetoric that we hear on this floor.

No, indeed, we are talking about a bill that is going to do all kind of mysterious things that have never received a hearing. It is going to rewrite laws that committees refuse to pass, and all of that is about to occur next week without the Members ever having seen the bill and without there ever having been even a final hearing.

What we should be talking about next week is a gift ban on the gifts that tie lobbyists and legislators and a reform of the lobby process. Apparently under this Speaker we are going to continue to write laws in secret that bind the American people, like was

done today in secret working with various special interest lobbyists to get the law written their way. The American people deserve to have this out in the public. We need to reform this Congress and change business as usual as much as we need to protect the seniors of our Nation and prevent these kinds of Medicare raids.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Louisiana [Mr. TAUZIN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. TAUZIN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida [Mr. DEUTSCH] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DEUTSCH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California [Mr. DORNAN] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. DORNAN addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York [Mr. TOWNS] is recognized for 5 minutes.

[Mr. TOWNS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.]

POLITICAL APPOINTEES ABUSING THEIR POSITIONS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina [Mr. JONES] is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, there is much talk throughout our Nation about reforming the way Washington, DC operates. The people are upset about the way politicians have been conducting business. One reason that people are upset is because they see political appointees abusing their position using tax dollars to work on reelection campaigns instead of doing the jobs they are paid to do.

Mr. Speaker, last week the people of eastern North Carolina got a firsthand example of that abuse. A Clinton political appointee in the Department of Agriculture was assigned to contact one of the newspapers in my district. He not only called to use the agricultural appropriations bill to campaign against Republicans, he also called to campaign against Medicare, student loans, and other issues.

What in the world is an Under Secretary of Agriculture doing campaigning about programs that have absolutely nothing to do with his job on taxpayers time?

The answer, Mr. Speaker, is that the Clinton administration talks about the need for reform but at the same time they are using taxpayers' dollars to campaign for reelection.

He called to talk about how much the Clinton administration cares about rural North Carolina, but at the same time the Clinton administration is recommending policies that would destroy the economy of rural eastern North Carolina.

As Gene Price, the editor of the Goldsboro News-Argus stated in an editorial, and I quote:

Bill Clinton is the biggest enemy of the tobacco farmer ever to sit in the White House.

Tobacco farmers aren't stupid. The man who has been going for their jugular ever since he has been in Washington now has the gall to send his emissary on a scare-the-hell-out-of-'em mission telling North Carolina farmers the Republicans are threatening their tobacco program.

I further quote Mr. Price:

Republicans and conservative Democrats in Congress should not be fooled. Certainly the Third District's WALTER JONES, Jr. sees the President's campaign for what it is.

Mr. Speaker, the Goldsboro News-Argus is right. The President's campaign is exactly that, a political campaign paid for with your tax dollar. Every single Member of Congress from North Carolina, Republican and Democrat alike, voted for the agriculture appropriations bill. It is the Clinton administration, not Congress, that is trying to destroy the tobacco farmers.

Mr. Speaker, it is the Clinton administration that is now trying to classify nicotine as a drug. It is the Clinton administration that is trying to put families that have grown tobacco for generations into the same category as Asian poppy growers.

Now this same Clinton administration has the gall to have its political appointees call my district to say that he, Bill Clinton, is worried about what the Republicans might do to tobacco. The bad news, Mr. Speaker, is that this kind of hypocrisy only adds to the cynicism about all people in public life. The good news is that the people of eastern North Carolina have long ago figured out the Clinton crowd. The working people of eastern North Carolina who pay their taxes, go to church and play by the rules know that there is very little relationship between what this administration does and says and really what it does and says in reality.

Mr. Speaker, no matter how many Clinton political appointees call my district to say otherwise, the people of eastern North Carolina know that an administration that is trying to destroy the tobacco farmer does not care about rural North Carolina.

In the future, Mr. Speaker, I would advise the President to have his political appointees confine their campaigning to Hollywood or to San Francisco